

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of reducing an amount of positive air pressure that attending personnel must maintain in a supine obese individual's lungs to move the individual's diaphragm, said obese individual lying in an approximately supine position on a base surface, said method comprising the steps of:

5 raising the individual's head and neck above the base surface; and

10 supporting the individual's upper body at an angle sufficient to cause the individual's abdominal mass to fall away from the diaphragm, thereby reducing the amount of air pressure required in the obese individual's lungs to move the individual's diaphragm.

15 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of raising the individual's head and neck above the base surface includes supporting the individual's head and neck on a head and neck support approximately six inches in height above the base surface.

3. A method of inserting an endotracheal breathing tube into the trachea of an obese individual lying in an approximately supine position on a base surface, said method comprising the steps of:

5 reducing an amount of air pressure that attending personnel must maintain in the supine obese individual's lungs to move the individual's diaphragm;

anaesthetizing the individual;

ventilating the individual;

10 aligning the oral, pharyngeal, and laryngeal axes of the individual to enable visual acquisition of the trachea; and

inserting the tube into the trachea.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of
15 reducing the amount of air pressure that attending personnel must maintain in the supine obese individual's lungs to move the individual's diaphragm includes the steps of:

20 raising the individual's head and neck approximately six inches above the base surface; and

supporting the individual's upper body at an angle sufficient to cause the individual's abdominal mass to fall away from the diaphragm.

25 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of ventilating the individual includes moving air into the individual's lungs with a ventilation bag.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of aligning the oral, pharyngeal, and laryngeal axes includes the steps of:

5 extending the individual's neck over a neck support;
and

rotating the individual's head backwards on a head support.